



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on a Proposed Rule for Hogfish in Federal Waters of the South Atlantic Region

Comment Period Ends on January 17, 2017

The proposed rule for Amendment 37 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 37) published on December 16, 2016 (81 FR 91104).

NOAA Fisheries is proposing to manage hogfish in the South Atlantic as two populations: Georgia through North Carolina and Florida Keys/East Florida. A population assessment determined that the Florida Keys/East Florida population is *undergoing overfishing (rate of removal is too high) and is overfished (population abundance is too low)* and, therefore, in need of a rebuilding plan. The overfishing and overfished status of the Georgia/North Carolina population is unknown.

The proposed rule for Amendment 37 contains the following actions:

- Modify the management unit for hogfish;
- Establish a rebuilding plan for the Florida Keys/East Florida population to increase hogfish biomass to sustainable levels;
- Specify commercial and recreational annual catch limits and accountability measures for the Georgia/North Carolina and Florida Keys/East Florida populations of hogfish; and,
- Modify or establish minimum size limits, commercial trip limits, and recreational bag limits for both populations of hogfish and establish a recreational fishing season for the Florida Keys/East Florida population.

For a list of the proposed actions, please see the frequently asked questions at:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2015/am37/index.html

Request for Comments

The comment period on the proposed rule ends on January 17, 2017. You may obtain electronic copies of Amendment 37 and its proposed rule from the NOAA Fisheries Web site at

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2015/am37/index.html or the e-Rulemaking Portal (see Addresses section).

Addresses

You may submit comments on the proposed rule, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2016-0068, by either of the following methods:

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.

1. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0068-0073>.
2. Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields.
3. Enter or attach your comments.

MAIL: Submit written comments to Nikhil Mehta, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

INSTRUCTIONS: Comments sent by any other method (such as e-mail), to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries.

All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business

information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

NOAA Fisheries Southeast is pleased to announce the introduction of our **Text Message Alert Program**. The program will allow you to sign up to receive important fishery related alerts via text message. Text alerts you may receive include immediate fishery openings and closures, and any significant changes to fishing regulations that happen quickly.

How to opt-in

Sign up for related alerts for one or more of the following groups. Standard message & data rates may apply. You may opt-out at any time.

- **Gulf of Mexico Recreational Fisheries:** Text GULFRECFISH to 888777
- **Gulf of Mexico Commercial Fisheries:** Text GULFCOMMFISH to 888777
- **South Atlantic Recreational Fisheries:** Text SATLRECFISH to 888777
- **South Atlantic Commercial Fisheries:** Text SATLCOMMFISH to 888777
- **Caribbean Fisheries:** Text CARIBFISH to 888777